

In The Claims

Kindly enter the claim amendments, without prejudice, as set forth below. A complete listing of the claims is provided, with a parenthetical indication of the status of each claim and markings to show current changes.

CLAIMS

1. (original) A continuous metallic strip casting plant (N) comprising an ingot mould (1), a device for the evacuation of casting wastes comprising in its turn a trolley (5) supplied with at least one chest (4b) to contain wastes and metallic scrap, suitable to move and to be positioned below said ingot mould, wherein said trolley has dimensions such as to house at least two chests (4a, 4b) next to each other.
2. (currently amended) The plant according to claim 1, wherein said chests have the opening formed so as to be suitable for sealing with the aperture of a inert chamber (3) below the ingot mould crossed by ~~the—a~~ cast strip to define an area non communicating with the outside environment.
3. (currently amended) The plant according to claim 2, wherein lifting means (7) are provided, said lifting means being placed below said ingot mould and suitable for raising from and for replacing on said trolley (5) at least one of said chests (4a, 4b).
4. (currently amended) The plant according to ~~any of the previous claims~~ claim 3, wherein said trolley (5) can house at least three chests contemporarily.
5. (currently amended) An evacuation method of metallic waste from a continuous metallic strip casting plant according to ~~one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, said method comprising the following steps:
  - a) filling a first chest (4a) of waste, fixed to an aperture in the lower part of an inert chamber (3) located beneath the ingot mould of said casting ~~line~~ plant;
  - b) positioning a ~~first seat for chests (60)~~ of a trolley (5) vertically underneath said first chest (4a), ~~said first seat being free, and a second housing of said trolley being~~ trolley (5) having a free chest housing (60) vertically underneath said first chest (4a) and a second housing ~~occupied by a second chest (4b)~~ occupied by a second chest (4b);

- c) depositing said first chest (4a) with appropriate ~~means of~~ loading/unloading means(7) into said free chest housing of said trolley (5);
  - d) moving said trolley (5) so as to arrange said second chest (4b) underneath said aperture of the lower part of the inert chamber (3);
  - e) gripping said second chest (4b) with ~~said~~ the appropriate ~~means of~~ loading/unloading means(7) and raising it to said aperture in the lower part of the inert chamber (3).
6. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5 further comprising ~~the removal~~ a step of removing of the trolley (5) with said first chest (4a) full of waste for further treatment of the wastes.
7. (currently amended) The method according to claims 5 or 6, ~~further~~ comprising ~~the~~ a step of introducing an inert gas into said inner-inert chamber (3) during the chest changeover steps.

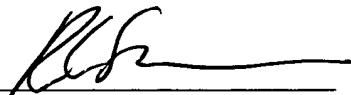
Applicant requests examination of the newly amended claims.

If any matters remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned by telephone at (617) 557-2900.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 50-0374** referencing docket no. 1182.013/3213PTUS. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

By:

  
Richard L. Sampson  
Registration No. 37,231

Dated: January 7, 2005  
Sampson & Associates, P.C.  
50 Congress Street  
Boston, MA 02109  
Telephone: (617) 557-2900  
Facsimile: (617) 557-0077